

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet DeaFestival-Kentucky 2012 to be held in Louisville July 7

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Frankfort, Ky. — Deaf culture will be front and center in Louisville this summer as DeaFestival-Kentucky takes the stage on July 7 at the Kentucky International Convention Center.

The biennial celebration of art, music, storytelling and theater in the deaf and hard of hearing community is produced by the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) and the Knowledge Center on Deafness. This year, the festival will enjoy an important third partner in the National Association of the Deaf (NAD).

NAD is holding its biennial conference in Louisville July 3-7, leading up to the daylong DeaFestival-Kentucky.

“The Commonwealth is very honored to host such an important event as the National Association of the Deaf conference,” said Gov. Steve Beshear. “To have that organization as a partner in our own DeaFestival puts Kentucky front and center in the eyes of deaf and hard of hearing people across the country.”

DeaFestival is expected to draw 10,000 visitors to downtown Louisville, according to KCDHH.

“These kinds of partnerships, like the one between the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the National Association of the Deaf, are important to the Commonwealth’s economic development,” Beshear said.

“We’re so excited to be partnering with NAD to put on this wonderful display of deaf culture,” said Virginia L. Moore, KCDHH executive director. “It really is a great opportunity to get a glimpse of what helps form a deaf artist’s vision, whether it is on the stage in song or drama or on canvas in paint or charcoal.

“It will especially be a very rich cultural experience for all kids, hearing, hard of hearing and deaf.”

Among the visitors to DeaFestival will be 19 delegates from the World Federation of the Deaf, which will hold its board meeting June 29-July 3 in Louisville. The federation is a humanitarian organization that works to ensure human rights for deaf individuals across the globe.

This will be the 10th edition of DeaFestival, which began in 1996 in Danville at Kentucky School for the Deaf. It was held annually until 1998 when it became a biennial event. This year’s DeaFestival will be the fifth to be held in Louisville.

DeaFestival-Kentucky will be a family-friendly, educational event with four primary components: the Elizabeth “Cookie” Williams Art Gallery featuring the work of deaf visual artists; SpotLights, which features prominent theatrical performers and comedians; a special children’s program featuring storytelling, music and poetry; and the Jam Tent, which features hip-hop and rock ‘n’ roll dancers and musicians. The event will feature more than 50 visual and performing artists.

Admission to DeaFestival is free and all events are at the Kentucky International Convention Center. For more information contact the KCDHH at 1-800-372-2907 or www.kcdhh.ky.gov.